



BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

P.O. BOX 2069

STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

March 29, 2012

Minutes of Meeting

Delegate Bell opened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and visitors

Members present: Delegate Bell, Donna Gateley, Alice Frick, Rachel Bavister, Diane Sandidge, Virgil Cook, Jane McNeil (Judy Wyatt represented Delegate Landes but cannot vote)

Members absent: Senator Hanger, Delegate Landes, John Pleasants

Jane McNeil informed the Board that she will be late for the meeting. A quorum will be present with Ms. McNeil, so the Board agreed to continue with the meeting and hold all votes until Ms. McNeil arrived.

Reading and approval of Minutes of the December 8, 2012 meeting

Board members had the opportunity to read the minutes and submit minor corrections in grammar. Grammar corrections were made.

ASL class report on COBB school

The American Sign Language (ASL) class presented a power point on the Cobb School for the deaf, the first attempt at organized schooling for deaf children in Virginia.

School Reported:

Budget

Janice Rankin presented the proposed *State Operated Program Annual Plan/Part B Flow-Through Application and Report 2012-2013*. The information had been made available for review before the meeting so the floor was opened for discussion. After discussion, the Board agreed to approve the report. (Official vote was postponed for the arrival of Jane McNeil.)

Janice Rankin presented the current VSDB budget. The school is 3% over budget with a forecasted deficit of \$352,000 by the end of the fiscal year. Discussion followed with a request to explain the reason for such a large deficit. Dr. Armstrong reported that the appropriate officials have been notified of the deficit (Laura Fornash, Secretary of Education, Ric Brown, Secretary of Finance, Dan Timberlake, Director of Department of Planning and Budget, Senator Emmitt Hanger, Scott Cummings with the Department of Planning and Budget) and a request for

additional funding has been submitted. The primary item that is pushing the school over the budget is the outstanding VITA bill. Currently the school owes \$375,000 to VITA. Even with the exception from VITA that was granted last year by Sam Nixon, the computers that were removed from classrooms were not removed from campus, so the school was charged full price for all equipment located on campus. The Board asked if it was possible to request the bill be expunged by VITA. Delegate Bell responded that that is within the powers of VITA to grant a forgiveness of debt. (The Board will vote on the writing of a letter to VITA requesting the bill be forgiven when Jane McNeil arrives.)

Personnel

Nate McLamb reported on the current status of teacher salaries. The request for funds to support a pay raise for the teachers was not funded. Teacher salaries will remain the same; this puts VSDB teachers on a 2006-2007 equivalent salary scale. Discussion followed on budget issues in relation to teacher salaries and other issues. The Board wants to find strategies to increase awareness of VSDB and the services provided. Increasing enrollment will increase funds. A proposal was made to create an ad-hoc committee made up of volunteers from the Board of Visitors, the VSDB Foundation and school to concentrate on promotion, recruiting and enrollment of new students. (Official vote was postponed for the arrival of Jane McNeil)

A motion was put forward to affirm current teacher salaries. (Official vote was postponed for the arrival of Jane McNeil.)

Evaluation process of administrators/supervisors

This new business agenda item was discussed at this time. Rachel Bavister reported that three years ago a letter was sent to Senator Hanger requesting the input from teachers on the evaluation of the Administration. (Superintendent, Principal, etc.) The senders of the letter felt that there was a need for a change in the evaluation process. Discussion followed. Samantha Vanterpool from the Attorney General's office reported that there are guidelines regulating the evaluation process and that the current process is directed by the Human Resource Department in Richmond. Input from subordinates is considered when evaluating administration.

Student Health

Amy Huffer reported that she is working with the Health Department to administer the PPD screening to VSDB employees who need the injection. This will save the school \$55.00 per injection. She is also working with the Health Department on Hepatitis B vaccines. She is also applying for a grant to replace existing Automated External Defibrillators (AED) with AED's with screens for equal access for deaf staff.

Residential Report

Mary Murray reported the dorm is running a walking program for the students. The "Silver Sneaker Award" encourages students (and staff) to walk. Each month a party is held for the participants. At the end of the program the student with the highest recorded steps will win a pair of sneakers donated by August Health.

Ms. Murray talked about the importance of sports for the students, not only for exercise but for the camaraderie and confidence the students achieve. Participation in sports also helps a student

be more productive and creative. A large amount of money is needed to maintain the VSDB sports program and the school does not have a boosters club to raise money.

Deaf and Blind Departments

Jack Johnson reported the student clubs have been active, collecting donations for a local pet shelter and collecting food for the food pantry through a reading program. A group of students will be traveling to Gallaudet for the Academic Bowl. The ASL class is working with staff on ASL skills. The girls in Bass Hall are writing a letter requesting air conditioning be installed for the dorm. Track is in full swing, the coaches at Fort Defiance are working with our students.

The school has another large class graduating this year, 8 in the Deaf Department and 8 in the Blind Department. This is the second year in a row for large classes and we will have another large class in two years. Recruiting is very important to maintain the numbers at the school.

The evaluation process for teachers is being revised at the state level. The new evaluation system will go into effect on July 1.

A Board member asked if vocational training is available for the students. VSDB students have been attending the Valley Vocational Technical Center (VVTC) since the 1990's. But currently there is no vocational training for younger students. Budget cuts make it cost prohibitive to offer vocational classes on campus.

Report on Life Skills Curriculum

This new business item was presented at this time. Diane Bryant reported that the residential program has adopted an Independent Living Skills program. There are two programs, one for deaf children and one for blind children. The curriculum is divided into elementary skills, middle school skills, and high school skills. Students are assessed on the elementary level skills first to make sure those skills are in place to build higher level skills.

Currently cooking skills are being developed, money skills are addressed in the student center, ironing safety, hair care, laundry, dental hygiene, and shopping skills are all a part of the program. The seniors are working on first aid, over-the-counter medications and self-defense strategies. These skills are important when living alone.

This curriculum is different from vocational training. The school does not have the necessary equipment for full implementation of a vocational program. It is designed to be fun and recreational while imparting important life skills. The dorm staff is being trained on how to implement the curriculum as part of everyday activities in the dorm.

Diversity Report

Cyndy Ward updated the Board on the Diversity Committee Survey about the move into the new education building. The students did not have many concerns. The primary concern was how to interact in the halls between classes. Staff has similar concerns, mostly centered on how to interact appropriately. The Blind Department expressed an interest in learning ASL and the Deaf Department expressed an interest in orientation and mobility etiquette. The committee is to form a student panel to facilitate an open discussion. Team building for staff will be part of the fall

training before students return to campus. The art teacher is working with the students to create an emblem to represent the new education building.

Enrollment Update

Cyndy Ward reported that for the current academic year 26 applications have been processed and 6 more are currently underway. Twenty-three new students have been accepted this year. Two elementary students have been accepted to start next year. In the Blind Department four middle school and three high school students were accepted. In the Deaf Department two preschool (plus one hearing peer), five elementary, five middle and four high school students were accepted.

(Jane McNeil is now present, creating a quorum.)

Naming of Education Building and Blind Dorm

The Executive Committee needs to meet to make a recommendation to the Board on the names of the two buildings. Jane McNeil MOVED to table the discussion of the names of the new buildings until the Executive Committee recommends names. The motion was SECONDED. The motion passed with six in favor, one opposed.

The Board reviewed items that needed to be approved.

- Minutes of December 8, 2012 meeting. Virgil Cook MOVED to accept minutes with grammar changes. Motion was SECONDED. Motion carried by voice vote.
- State Operated Program Annual Plan and Part B Flow-Through Application and Report 2012-2013. Jane McNeil MOVED to accept the plan as written. The motion was SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Board Chair and Vice Chair, with the assistance of Dr. Armstrong, will draft a letter to VITA requesting forgiveness of current bill. Virgil Cook MOVED to proceed with letter. The motion was SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Ad-hoc committee made up of volunteers from the Board of Visitors, the VSDB Foundation and school to concentrate on promotion, recruiting and enrollment of new students. Rachel Bavister MOVED to set up committee. The motion was SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Affirm current teacher salaries. Samantha Vanterpool informed the Board that they are bound by policy to ensure the teachers have competitive salaries. At the September 27, 2011 Board meeting the Board approved ten decision packages to be submitted to Richmond. One decision package was in the amount of \$80,438.00 to increase teacher salaries to a competitive level. The decision package was not funded. There is a need to hire teachers before the next Board meeting. Jane McNeil MOVED to adopt the 2012-2013 teacher pay scale which is competitive, contingent on funding. Until funding is approved VSDB will continue offering teacher salaries on the current scale. The motion was SECONDED. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

VSDB Foundation

Nancy Armstrong reported the Foundation has met three times. A grant is being provided to the school to purchase computers. The computers will be installed over spring break. Scholarships are being offered to all children who wish to attend the summer program on campus. The Deaf

summer program is in conjunction with James Madison University and a grant from the National Science Foundation. The Blind Department's theme is History Around the World and the focus is on technology and orientation and mobility. The next Foundation meeting will be April 16, 2012.

Construction update

At the next Board meeting the education building will be available to tour. The new deaf dorm was occupied in the fall while the new blind dorm was occupied after the winter break. Peery and Swanson are on schedule and will be occupied by the fall 2012. Watts Hall is on schedule and will be available to the elementary students in the fall of 2012. The last item to be completed will be the court yard between the chapel and Peery and Swanson. Darden Hall is scheduled to be demolished and a parking lot will be put in. The blind dorm can sleep 36 students and the deaf dorm can sleep 48.

BOV Membership Orientation Training by Samantha Vanterpool

Board members received training material from Ms. Vanterpool in both hard copy and email. All Board members present participated in the training.

Public Comment

Byron Heath, VSDAA President, introduced himself to the Board and confirmed the Deaf Alumni support the Board and are willing to assist in any way needed.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 28, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the Boardroom.